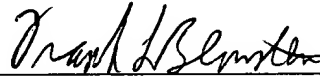


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REMARKS

The foregoing amendments have been made to ensure correct dependencies in the claims, and to ensure that the Examiner receives a copy of the Abstract, which was part of the publication of this PCT application. Early, favorable consideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 16, 2001

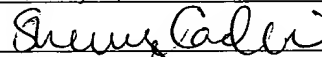
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APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Once Amended) A communications network for transferring data in accordance with a transfer priority number, the network having a number of switching nodes which transfer data transmitted between end stations coupled to the network, each switching node comprising:

a store for storing data prior to transfer;

a monitor for monitoring the volume of data being transferred through the switching node;

a comparator for comparing the volume of data to a first predetermined threshold; and,

a signal generator for generating a congestion signal if the respective volume of traffic exceeds the first predetermined threshold, wherein the adjacent switching nodes and/or end stations are responsive to the congestion signal to temporarily store at least some of the data to be transferred via the respective switching node, the data for storage being selected in accordance with the priority number.

3. (Once Amended) A communications network according to claim 2, wherein the second predetermined threshold corresponds to a lower volume of traffic than the first predetermined threshold.

4. (Once Amended) A communications network according to claim 2, wherein the second predetermined threshold equals the first predetermined threshold.

5. (Once Amended) A communications network according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, wherein the monitor monitors the amount of data stored in the store.

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6. (Once Amended) A communications network according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, wherein the first predetermined threshold comprises a number of predetermined sub-thresholds, the congestion signal including an indication of the sub-threshold which has been exceeded, and wherein the data to be temporarily stored is selected based on the sub-threshold exceeded and the priority number.

7. (Once Amended) An end station for coupling to a communications network which transfers data in accordance with a transfer priority number, the communications network being adapted to monitor the volume of data being transferred there through and to generate a congestion signal if the respective volume of traffic exceeds a first predetermined threshold, the end station comprising:

a store for storing data;

an interface for coupling the end station to the communications network; and,

a processor responsive to the congestion signal to cause the end station to temporarily store at least some of the data to be transferred to the communications network, the data for storage being selected in accordance with the priority number.

9. (Once Amended) An end station according to claim 7 [or claim 8], wherein the processor generates the data to be transferred.

10. (Once Amended) A method of transferring data via a communications network in accordance with a transfer priority number, the network having a number of switching nodes adapted to transfer data transmitted between end stations coupled to the network, the method comprising the steps of:

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causing each switching node to monitor the volume of data being transferred therethrough;

comparing the volume of data to a first predetermined threshold;

causing a switching node to generate a congestion signal if the respective volume of traffic exceeds the first predetermined threshold, wherein the adjacent switching nodes and/or end stations are responsive to the congestion signal to temporarily store at least some of the data to be transferred via the respective switching node, the data for storage being selected in accordance with the priority number.

12. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the second predetermined threshold corresponds to a lower volume of traffic than the first predetermined threshold.

13. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the second predetermined threshold equals the first predetermined threshold.

14. (Once Amended) A method according to [any of claims 10 to 13] claim 10, wherein each switching node includes a store for temporarily storing data, and wherein the step of monitoring the volume of data being transferred through the switching node comprises monitoring the amount of data stored in the store.

15. (Once Amended) A method according to [any of the claims 10 to 14] claim 10, wherein the predetermined threshold comprises a number of predetermined sub-thresholds, the congestion signal including an indication of the sub-threshold which has been exceeded, and wherein the data to be temporarily stored is selected based on the sub-threshold exceeded and the priority number.

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Claims 16-20 are added as new claims.

IN THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE:

The Abstract is newly added

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